

Mr Chairman, Members of the Committee:

My name is Ron Laubach of Power, MT. I am strongly opposed to this bill giving the right of eminent domain of our Montana land to foreign or for-profit corporations.

My ancestors homesteaded a farm in Dutton, Montana 100 years ago last year. This farm has been in our family for 4 generations and I am determined to keep this farm in place and operating for my kids.

MATL is in the process of working with me to come to a deal to erect 2 electrical poles approximately 800 feet tall on this farm. One of these poles will require guy wires which I would have to farm around, and the other pole is in the middle of a wetland on our farm, where my family has hunted for these past 100 years. They also want to put 4 poles on my neighbor's land, one of which is approximately 200 feet from our building site.

I have discussed an alternative route placing the poles 900 feet south of the building site and following the sections line north to connect with the rest of the line with the MATL employees and DEQ employees who have all agreed would be a better route. This route would eliminate the need of one pole, which I have been told costs about \$50,000 per pole to erect. Because MATL received federal stimulus money for this project and needs to finish this project within a certain timeline in order to be able to keep this stimulus money, they have told me that moving the poles is not an option. I disagree!!!

The solution would be for MATL to condemn my land and use the power of eminent domain to take my property and put the poles in this ludicrous placement against my wishes. Where are my rights? Why should a profitable corporation have the right to come into Montana, take my land, put poles 200 feet from my building site, make a profit and ship this energy to California?

I am not opposed to the MATL line; I would only like to request that the landowner has a say on the placement of these poles. There have been many changes to the placement of these poles on my land. MATL and DEQ have made deals with my neighbors, moving the poles to suit these neighbors' requests. I was never informed of these changes, nor had a say in whether I approved in these changes. Where are my rights?

I would like to ask that you would take the rights of Montana citizens seriously!

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*Remember Grandma Mo  
HB 283 HB 566 '09' Session*